

FAQs for

ProChek® ID and ProChek® S

Sterilization Monitors



We use a steam (autoclave) sterilizer in our office. How do we know it is working correctly?

The CDC Guidelines advise health care providers to use a quality assurance monitoring program that includes three components:

1. Physical – observe and record mechanical gauges;
2. Chemical indicators (color change ink) on every package and in every load;
3. Biological indicators (spore testing).

How do ProChek indicators fit into a quality assurance program?

ProChek ID Indicator Tape (PIT100, PIT120, PIT340) and ProChek ID Indicator Labels for Dry Heat (DHS006) along with the ink indicator printed on ProView® plus self-seal sterilization pouches are external Class I chemical indicators. The temperature sensitive ink changes color and

offers a quick way to verify that a particular package or pouch has been processed. ProChek ID Indicator Tape is especially useful as the external indicator for items and cassettes packaged in opaque sterilization wrap.

ProChek ID Indicator Strips (SM4340) are internal Class III indicators (react to presence of heat and steam sterilant). The ink changes from white to black (or brown in chemical vapor processes). This product meets the CDC and AAMI guideline for a chemical indicator that should be used inside every package, pouch and cassette to verify penetration of steam sterilant inside the package.

ProChek S Steam Sterilization Integrators (TSI440) are internal Class IV chemical monitors. The term “integrator” means the special chemical ink changes from yellow to blue/purple as it reacts to heat and steam over a time period closely aligned to the parameters required to kill spores. They provide a higher level of assurance that sterilization parameters are met, especially inside larger cassettes and surgery packs.

Can ProChek S be used for all types of sterilizers?

It is specifically designed for use with standard steam sterilizers. It is not suitable for monitoring chemical vapor (Barnstead/Harvey Chemiclaves™), dry heat, or Statim™ pulse sterilizers.

Do chemical integrator monitors such as ProChek S take the place of biological spore tests?

No. As noted previously, a sterilization monitoring program must include biological spore tests, preferably at least once a week.

Do we need to use both external and internal indicators with every pouch and package?

The CDC states that if the internal indicator is visible from the outside of the package, then that is sufficient. As a practical matter, most facilities find it helpful to use both for every package.

We use sterilization pouches with “built-in” internal indicators. Do we still need to use ProChek ID Indicator Strips or ProChek S Integrators?

Pouches with so-called internal indicators only demonstrate that the outside of the pouch was exposed to heat. They do not provide assurance of heat and steam penetration inside bulkier packages or cassettes.



Can I use the ProChek ID Indicator Tape in my dry heat sterilizer or Chemiclave?

No, the tape is specific to the steam process. It will become brittle and char in the dry heat process. The indicator requires both steam and heat to change color and will not properly change in the low moisture environment of the Chemiclave or dry heat.

Which indicator should be used for dry heat processes?

Use ProChek Indicator Labels for Dry Heat. They are intended to be affixed to the exterior of nylon film packaging. The green ink changes to black upon exposure to a minimum of 300 ° F (140 ° C).

What is the protocol to follow when chemical indicators do not change color or in the case of ProChek S, do not turn completely blue/purple?

Do not release the load of instruments for use. Check the mechanical controls and print-outs if available and verify that the correct cycle time and temperature are selected. Check the condition of the sterilizer door gasket. Review error codes displayed on models with this feature. Check to see that table top steam sterilizers have adequate distilled water in the tank. Reprocess the load with fresh external and internal indicators.